1:Dieterlen--2 E-5 (1946-1949) 1951 FA8 Bambara FA8

/xiii/ Introduction

101 The Bambara tribes which form part of the Mandé group are at
131 present spread out in French Sudan from the 11th to the 14th degrees latitude north and from the 7th to the 11th degrees longitude west. Three groups which have settled respectively in the circle of Issa Ber, in Kaarta, and in the circle of Odienné are noticeably separated from the central group which occupies the shores of the Niger around Bamako and Ségou.

105 The Bambara live in small villages in the savanna; they practice primarily agriculture (millet, digitaria /Fonio/, rice, maize, etc.), but also herding and gardening. The shore dwellers of the Niger are fishermen and live in symbiotic relationships with the Bozo who taught them fishing techniques and who are generally recognized as the first inhabitants of these regions.

173 The Bambara state that they came from Mandé. This region, where the successive capitals of the ancient kingdom of Mali were situated, has long attracted the attention of research workers (1).

1. See J. Vidal, Au sujet de l'emplacement du Mali (ou Melli /on the subject of the Mali site/), pp. 251-268; Le véritable emplacement du Mali /The true site of the Mali/, pp. 606-619. This author designates by Mali I to IV the four villages of Dyélibakoro, Niani, Maninkoura, and Kangaba, which had been successively the royal city. See also Ch. Monteil, Les Empires du Mali /The empires of Mali/, p. 13.

Moreover, it is "the center from which radiated forty-four tribes at present spread out in the area between the Atlantic coast, the Senegal, and the Niger, or to Dahomey" (2). The region indicated above also

2. See D. Zahan. Aperçu sur la pensée théogonique des Dogon /Survey of theogonic thought of the Dogon/, pp. 113-133. This author gives the name of the tribes originating

121 This work deals only with the Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta since it has already been noted that, save for their specifically local history, [4] a study of their concepts and institutions is valid in general for all of the Bambara.

103 131 It is exceedingly difficult, besides, to be entirely certain as to which of the Bambara actually belong to the Kaarta and

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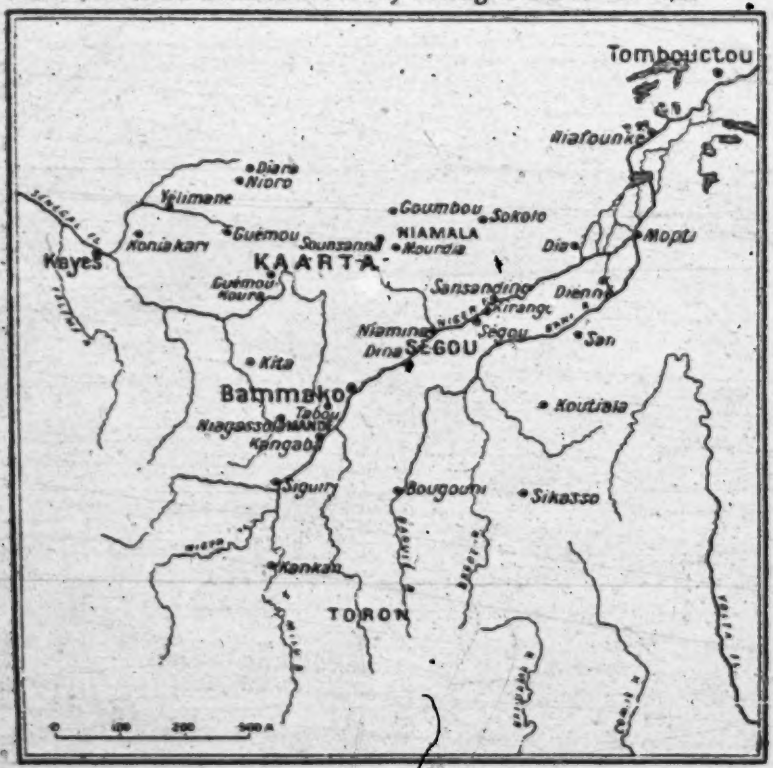

Ségou areas since the two designations do not correspond to any very exact geographical region. When a native speaks of Kaarta or of Ségou, he only vaguely understands the terms, and this with good reason.

101 103 131 I have noted elsewhere (1) that, etymologically speaking, the

1. In my work Les Khassonké [The Kasonke], which appeared in the series, Revue du Monde Musulman.

101 word which we write and pronounce Kaarta means "country of
103 the Karé" or, more accurately, "the group of the Karé." Wher-
131 ever there are Karé people they are called, in the Soninké language, Karu-ta, [5] which is contracted to Karta. From this we made Kaarta because we misheard the long first "a." The word Kaarta designates a particular area only because of the people who inhabit it, and its value as a geographical expression is acquired only by extension. Among the natives the term is used for various areas within the region which extends from Goumbou to Koniakari and from Nioro to the Senegal River. On our maps, Kaarta is bounded by Kingui on the north, Diomboko on the west, Senegal and Bélédougou on the south, and Kaniaga on the east. However, all of these names of cantons themselves have very vague meanings.

101 For the purpose of the present work, the word Kaarta takes
103 on a special meaning. The Bambara who founded a clan at
131 Sounsan-na in the Karé country are called Karta-n-ko in the
614 Soninké language and Karta-n-ka-u (the Kaarta people) in the Bambara language. As a result, Kaarta has become the name of the areas occupied by the clan in its various peregrinations.

The "people of Ségou" acquired their name in quite a different manner, since they were named for Ségou, the capital of the clan. The country of Ségou should be understood strictly to allude to the to-da which, to be described in chapter 5, was, by and large the area surrounding Ségou and occupied by the chief and his family and followers. In a wider sense, the country of Ségou referred to all the territory under the authority of the Ségou clan. At the height of the clan's power, "the country of Ségou" occupied both banks of the Niger, following the axis of the river from Kangaba to Timbuktu.

101 Our European need to have things clearly defined may be
131 satisfied by having the territorial limits of Kaarta and Ségou set
631 forth on a map, but on the native level, with which this book is primarily concerned, such local definition has little relevance. These empires did not aim to dominate any given area but rather sought to exploit as large a number of individuals as possible without regard to country or race.

128 Note: In the following pages, as well as in the foregoing, words in Bambara or other Sudanese dialects which are used are italicized; see Chapter 7 for explanations. [Omitted in translation.]

[7] I. Origin

Name

101 The peoples with whom this work is concerned are known, generally speaking, by the name of Bambara, both to Europeans and to most of the natives. They call themselves Banmana or Bamana.

European writers have offered two theories to explain the etymology of the words Bambara, Banmana and Bamana.

According to one school of thought, the word Bambara derives from bamba or bamma (crocodile) and alludes to a tne (1)

1. A magico-religious taboo, see Chapter 2.

which is reputedly common to all natives known as Bambara. This theory is nullified by the fact that the taboo, which was supposed to be generally imposed, is actually imposed on only a few of the Bambara. Further, the suggested correlation has never been proved to exist between the name of the tne and either individual or collective denomination among the Bambara.

Other authorities suggest that, according to the Banmana themselves, the word Banmana means "rejection of a master" (ban-ma-na) and alludes to the legend which tells how, early in the thirteenth century, the Banmana left their native land and went to Toron in order to escape from the yoke of their Malinké conquerors. This etymology, which is linguistically defensible, would apply only to the people who immigrated to Toron, and it still does not tell us by what name they and their congeners were known before the migration.

101 I have also been told that the words Bambara, Banmana and Bamana come from the Bambara root ban' or ba, meaning "to refuse." My informant, a Soninké, claimed that when their hegemony came to an end in the Ségou region, the Soninké noted a general rebellion among the serfs and said: "u bara bango bè la," which meant (1) "They have refused (to submit) [8] on

1. According to the aforesaid informant.

all sides." And this same informant added that, when the rebels later returned and made peace with their masters, they put the following question: "au mar' kan'," meaning (2) "Under what conditions will you keep us?" The word Bambara would thus derive from the first expression and the word Marka (2) from the second.

2. According to the same informant.

I mention this interpretation as an example of the etymologies which are entirely made up by the informants and to which one can attach significance only after rigorous and critical investigation. In this case I have no doubt whatever that my informant's two expressions were invented for the occasion and that they are worthless; indeed, I cannot understand at all the translation of the second expression, au mar' kan'.

I am convinced that the natives simply do not know the origin of the name Bambara or its variants, or rather that they are incapable of explaining it.

However, it does seem likely that the words Bambara, Banmana and Bamana are actually derived from the same root ba. Thus, if the final na, a collective suffix, is removed from the word banmana, we are left with banma, a word which is comparable, morphologically speaking, to finma. The latter means "black" in Bambara and it may be replaced with fin' and fi without change of meaning: by analogy one is led to say that ban' and ba are, in the same way, equivalents of banma.

101 It is interesting to compare these two monosyllables with the Peul [Fulani] word bal, which also means "black" and which can also be spelled ba since its final l, like the n' in ban', is merely euphonious. The comparison is valid because Peul is by origin a Negro language native to the area and, further, because a comparative study of the Sudanese dialects has shown much mutual borrowing of words.

From all this I conclude that the term Bambara and its variants likewise signify "black men."

Further, foreigners and their half-caste or naturalized offspring, all of whom we include under the name Peul, ruled over western Sudan in early times, and it is reasonable to suppose that the name Bambara dates from that period and represents the name by which the Peul rulers designated the natives. [9] Or, it may be safer to say that the word Bambara and its variants derive from the same root ba, meaning "black," which came from an ancient dialect of which the modern Peul language is also an offshoot.

However that may be, the designation Bambara, which is used generally throughout western Sudan, has many meanings today. For the Moslem, the Bambara is the infidel, the pagan, the drinker of alcohol; for the pastoral peoples (Moors and Peuls), he is the farmer and also the Negro. For Semites and those who claim to be Semites, he is principally the Negro. For those who were or are rulers, he is the slave; and for all he is the primitive man who is socially inferior.

101 578 The word Bambara has shared the same fate as the word Peul in that it is used simply as an epithet: the name Bambara is applied to all pagans (1), farmers, slaves and black men. Indeed

1. "... It is absolutely certain that in the minds of Sudanese Moslems in general and of those living at the mouth of the Niger in particular, the word Bambara is applied, not to any particular people, nor to a specific tribe, but rather to all Sudanese who have remained faithful to the native religion." (Delafosse, Vol. 1, p. 126).

101 578 the word has so thoroughly taken on a pejorative sense that its use may be a grave insult. What an insult it would be for a Moslem to be called a Bambara, i.e., an infidel, a pagan and an alcoholic!

101 In the strictest sense, however, the word Bambara is applied by the Malinké and, following their lead, by the French only to natives who speak the Bambara dialect and who call themselves Banmana or Bamana. Barring specific exceptions, we shall henceforth use the word in this limited sense in the present work.

X 173 It is evident from the foregoing remarks that the Bambara belong to very ancient indigenous families; indeed, they themselves consider this to be so, and they are so considered by others.

Native informants are likely to say that the Bambara are former slaves of the Malinké; but they also say that the Somono are former slaves of the "Ségou people." Later on (see Chapter 4), we shall see in what sense [10] this slavery should be understood. It was a characteristic result of the political form of the native governments.

101 In addition to the general name given to them or accepted by them, which applies to one or another group, the Bambara are designated by terms expressing their geographic distribution. There are, for instance, those who live at Bélédougou (called Beledugu-ka-u); those in the Kaarta area (Karta-n-ka-u); those at Ségou (Segu-n-ka-u); those around Bani-n-ko (Bani-n-ko-ka-u). Each of these expressions also has a political connotation; Ségu-n-ka-u is often used for members of the ruling party, which holds power at and operates from Ségou, and only the context or the drift of the conversation will make it possible to know what people are actually being discussed.

Among themselves the various Bambara groups often describe one another by nicknames. The "Kaarta people" ironi- [302] cally call the "Ségou people" Tlu-kene-u, "those with a single braid," because of a peculiar way of doing their hair, or Nya-ni-Nyélé-u, because Nya and Nyélé are popular names for women among the people around Ségou.

101 614 It is common, too, to call all the members of a clan by a name derived from that of a clan founder or ancestor. Thus, the

B 101 614 Kaarta people are called Nya-Ngolo-la after Nya-Ngolo, an ancestor of the chiefs of the clan; and the Ségou people are called Barama-Ngolo-la after Barama-Ngolo, an ancestor of their clan.

B S 101 [567] Nicknames are also used between individuals of different tribes. The Soninké often call the Bambara Dyon-ko (slaves) because, having long been engaged in the slave trade, they sold many Bambara as slaves (1). The Bambara generally call the

1. See in the Kaarta chronicle which follows how Massa and others after him captured caravans of Bambara slaves belonging to Soninké owners.

Soninké Marka (for Mara-ka). They still use the term Marka dialan'u (dry Marka people) to designate the Soninké who abandoned their own dialect in favor of the Bambara dialect. On the other hand, they use the term Marka kan'-fo-la-u (those who speak Marka) for those among the Soninké who have retained their own dialect.

In the Ségou region, the Bambara use the expression Bani-n-kono-u (birds of the Bani) for the Soninké, people who live along the banks of [11] that river; their more general term for the Soninké is the surname Dyeme-ka-u, from Dyeme (or Dyime) meaning "a long-legged water bird" of the marabou species. According to the interpretation given to me, the names Bani-n-kono-u and Dyeme-ka-u allude to periodic journeys made by the Soninké to the large commercial centers to the south, especially Ouorodougou [Ouagadougou?].

The Ségou country was called Dyeme-ka-u by the Bambara during the period of the Soninké rule (1). On the other hand, when

B S 172 101 1. At this period, the Soninké chief, Souleiman-ba Kofta, lived at Sora, today a ruin, which the Bambara call Soro-toumou (ruins of Sora) and which is situated in the Ségou country between Massa-la and Kono-dimini.

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Sora was the capital of a territorial district called Tandougou.

The songs of the gessere, who are the Soninké equivalents of the Bambara dyeli, often tell of Souleiman-ba Kolta, of Sora and Tandougou.

the Bambara came into power, the Soninké called it Dyon-ka-dugu (land of slaves).

Origin

B
*173 The tradition which is generally accepted, and which was first reported by Raffenel and Quintin, has it that the ancestors of the Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta came originally from Toron, a region situated at the headwaters of the Milo and the Baoulé, both tributaries of the upper Niger. From there they presumably moved in a northeasterly direction and then spread out toward their present habitat and developed the empires of Ségou and Kaarta (2).

2. "An oft-reported tradition says that the Banmana came from Toron, the eastern province of Oussoulou, situated in the present colony of the Ivory Coast. It was on the route between Odienné and Sikasso, not far from the former. It seems, indeed, likely that the original habitat of the Banmana was located in the extreme southeast corner of the cradle of the Mandé family and that it extended from the right bank of the upper Niger, approximately near Siguiri, to the left bank of the upper Bagbé (or Bagoé), where it touched the territory of the Sénoufo [Senufo] people. The first conquests of the Mandingue [Mondingo]

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2: Monteil--15 G-5 (1902-1923) 1924 FA8 Bambara FA8
French West African Natives FA2
Malinke FA27

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double meaning is no less evident in the Tarikh-es-Soudan, especially on p. 161 of the French translation. The same double usage is evident in oral traditions.

Thus it is understandable that the word Mandé has come to be considered as an equivalent of our words "empire" and "kingdom" when they are used in a geographical sense, and that, as a result, the term has varied in application because it depended on an ever-changing territorial domain subject to the domination of successive ma.

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However, it is not only from the geographical point of view that the term Mandé has remained indefinite or vaguely defined; the same uncertainty prevails on the political level. In a general way, Mandé is considered to be exclusively the empire of the Mandingue people, who are one of the subdivisions of the group called Mandé by the Europeans (1). In order to

> 1. Mandé, as the name for a group of peoples or of native languages, is unknown to the Sudanese; in this sense it is used exclusively by the Europeans.

understand the meaning attached to the word "empire" in western Sudan, it is essential to place oneself on the native level and not on that of our European civilization from which the term is borrowed.

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Briefly, the Sudanese empire is a system of clans. It is formed by bringing together of elements taken over from clans that have either disintegrated or are in the process of doing so. It acquires power and extension through the influence of the founder or, less frequently, of one of his successors, and then falls into decline at the hands of enemies or as a result of schisms which arise at the death of the ruler on whose success and "flair" its fortunes have depended.

It is this constantly repeated process of grouping, separation and regrouping which dominates the entire [15] history of the Sudanese empires and dynasties and which makes any study of the people so very difficult. The geographical nomenclature is,

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2: Monteil--16 G-5 (1902-1923) 1924 FA8 Bambara FA8
French West African Natives FA2
Malinke FA27

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B of course, dependent on these social facts. Often a region is
101 named after the people who inhabit it as, for instance, is the
103 case with Kaarta. It may also derive its name from a dominant political group, and when a region has been ruled by successive groups, it acquires a series of superimposed names even though the territories to which they apply may not necessarily be identical; this, too, applies to Kaarta -- a poorly defined region.

This explains how it came about that different empires were lumped together under the same name, Mandé (and other variants). The empire ruled by the Keïta chiefs was merely the last to arise and it presumably dates from the beginning of the thirteenth century.

B One tradition has it that the ancestors of the founders of
*173 this thirteenth-century empire came from the east -- specifically
M from Kong (1). Under the leadership of Kabala Simbo Keïta,
173

1. I see in this precision nothing more than the usual polarization of which I speak on p. 45 , note 1 .

they settled in Dodougou, a canton whose capital was at Tabou and whose chief, a Bambara of the Konnaté dyamu maintained his power with the help of a militarized group called Mandinké. This was a group similar to those composing the sofa, ton-dyon' or furu-ba-dyon' who supported the fortunes of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta. In the Soninké language the word mandinké means,
M literally, "a person of the master's (or lord's or king's) house-
[101] hold," and in the plural it means "the master's (or king's) people."

The canton of Kiri (2), adjoining that of Dodougou, was

2. The Dodougou (abbreviated to Do) and the Kiri are, indeed, considered to be the oldest cantons of the so-called Mandé clan. In this connection, see Humblot, "Du nom propre et des appellations chez les Malinké ..." [On Proper Names

*173 614 we have just noted, would have formed an unbreakable bloc if both elements had not been affected by the ferment of dissociation referred to in the course of this study.

[487] The to-da derived the larger portion of its prosperity from the Niger. Communication and transport could most easily be maintained along this artery, and it was the need to make the greatest possible use of the river that brought about the organization of the Somono.

●[101] [564] Etymologically, the word Somono simply means "fisherman." Like any trade practiced exclusively, professional fishing involves a certain loss of standing, and that is why the Somono are said to be people of caste. This status is especially due to the supremacy of the clan over the Somono, without whom it could not have exploited the river.

614 564 *173 After using force to annex them, Mamari added to their number by assigning some of the furu-ba dyon' to the group, so that the Somono were soon closely dependent on the furu-ba. At the orders of the fama and his agents, they were required to [505] maintain ferry service across the river, to provide river transport in both directions, and to pay a fee in kind on their catch, with the understanding that they could continue to live according to the traditional Somono customs.

In return, the Somono were under the protection of the clan and their leaders benefitted from the generosity of the fama. They would occasionally be given a share of booty. [324]

Little by little, the few original Somono families were lost in the flood of newcomers. These included: the furu-ba dyon' who had become Somono on orders from the fama; people of diverse origins who had adopted Somono status of their own accord because they found it better than their own; and finally, the children of both, who were Somono by birth.

[233] It was likewise the exploitation of the property of the to-da that brought about a similar organization of the shepherds, or Peul. Let us first note that this term has no ethnic significance; it designates all who raise or watch over animals as a regular and professional occupation. Here, too, there is a kind of loss of standing, since a working shepherd could hardly do without a sponsor and must attach himself to a master. This is the case for

[1] CHAPTER 1

DEMOGRAPHY AND TRIBAL AND SUBTRIBAL GROUPS

I. Nomenclature

A. European Definitions

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Monseigneur Bazin, in his Bambara dictionary of 1906, gave us the etymology of Banmana, "men of the cayman," whereas Mani or Mali would mean "those of the hippopotamus," the two names having a totemic origin.

For Élisée Reclus in 1887 (Nouvelle géographie universelle [New Universal Geography], Vol. XII: L'Afrique occidentale [West Africa]), Bamana means "steep crag."

Delafossé (Haut Sénégal-Niger [Upper Senegal and Niger]) in 1923 makes a distinction between Bambara and Banmana.

The Banmana would commonly be called Bambara by Europeans and the other Sudanese. Bambara is the word used in the Tarikh-es-Soudan [History of Sudan]. The Moslems designate all non-Moslem Sudanese as Bambara. Thus, the Sénoufo [Senufo] are called Bambara by the Dioula of Sikasso; the non-Moslem Malinké are called Bambara by the Dioula of Odienné; similarly for the Gbanian and Dagari of Upper Volta, etc. That is why Delafosse prefers to
[173] name the people of Ségou, Bélédougou, etc., as they name themselves, that is, Banmana, which supposedly means "the refusal of the Master," in allusion to the legend according to which the Banmana left their land of origin (Ouassoulou) at the beginning of the thirteenth century to escape the yoke of the conquering Malinké.

According to Monteil, Bambara comes from the root Ba, "black."

B. Native Definitions

The Bambara often designate themselves by terms which indicate their geographical distribution.

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Example: Those of Bélédougou are the Bélédugu-ka-u;
Those of Kaarta are the Kaarta-n-ka-u;
Those of Ségou are the Ségu-n-ka-u ...

Each of these expressions has at the same time a political significance. Ségu-n-ka-u means the people of the party in power at Ségou. The context alone determines which people are meant.

[2] Among themselves, the Bambara factions sometimes
[552] call each other by nicknames: of the people of Ségou, the people of Kaarta say ironically, "those of Tu-kele-u" (those of the single braid), alluding to their coiffure, or else Nya-ni-nyele-u, "those of Nya and Nyélé" (Nya and Nyélé are women's names common at Ségou). All the members of a clan may also be grouped under a term derived from the name of the founder or ancestor of the clan: the people of Kaarta may call themselves Nya-Ngolo-la (the people of Nya-Ngolo, ancestor of the clan); the people of Ségou may be called Barama-Ngolo-la (the people of Barama-Ngolo, ancestor of the clan).

There are also nicknames for individuals of other tribes.
[186] The Bambara are called Dyonko (slaves) by the Soninké, who long exploited the Bambara for the slave trade, while the Bambara in turn call the Soninké the Marka Dialan'u (Marka Seer), because they gave up their own dialect for the Bambara dialect.

II. Situation

A. Ethnic Classification

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Delafosse has made a broad classification of the peoples inhabiting Upper Senegal and Niger. Unfortunately, this classification too often mixes language and physical traits. Thus, he puts the Bambara in the Mandé family, which is divided into three groups comprised of these main peoples:

First group (northern): three peoples, the Bozo, the Soninké (or Sarakolé or Marka), and the Dioula.

Second group (central): five peoples, the Kagoro, the Banmana (or Bambara, including the Somono caste), the Kassonké (or Mandingue [Mandingo]), and the Foulanké.

|3| To the east, they are found in the Bendougou, Minianka
619 (the banks of the Niger and the Bani to the south of San and Ségou being occupied by the caste of Somono fishermen), and Kénédougou regions.

To the south, in the Ouassoulou.

To the southwest, in the Manding, the Bélédougou, and Fouladougou regions.

To the west, in the Kangaran, the Bambouk, and the Guidimaka regions on the banks of the Senegal.

In short, the habitat of the Bambara lies within a large V formed by the upper Senegal and the upper Niger.

C. Neighboring Tribes

●|10| The Bambara are the most important people of the western Sudan and of the southern circles. Nevertheless, they are very mingled with other populations according to the regions we shall further define.

Among these other populations the principal ones are:

The Peul (Foula [Fulah], Foulbé [Fulbe], Fellata [Felata], a nomadic population found throughout West Africa from Senegal to the Egyptian Sudan. They speak the same language as the Toucouleur [Tukolor] Popular.

The Malinké, an important Mandingue people who speak a dialect close to Banmana and who are found in Guinea and in the Sudan (Satadougou, Nioro, Kayes, Bafoulabé, Kita, Bamako, Bougouni).

The Kassonké, who live in the Senegal Valley upriver from Kayes, are of mixed Malinké and Toucouleur origin; they speak a dialect close to Malinké.

The Sarakolé, Soninké or Marka, are an ancient people linked to the history of the empire of Ghana; they speak a Mandingue dialect related to Bambara. Those of Kouroumari speak Bambara and are of mixed Bambara blood.

[4] In Mourdiah, out of 14,000 Marka, a large proportion is Bambarized.

The Songhaï, a people of the middle Niger, have swarmed from the region of Niamey up to Lake Débo and Djenné.

10/ The Senoufo or Minianka, an important people in the circles of San, Koutiala, Bougouni, and Bobo Dioulasso, speak Sénoufo.

The Bobo in the region of San, Bobo-Dioulasso, and Dedougou, speak Bobo but are divided into two large branches according to their dialects: the Black Bobo and the Red Bobo.

The Dogon, remainder of the ancient inhabitants of the Nigerian regions from Bamako to Lake Débo, live for the most part in Bandiagara and Douentza and speak Dogon.

The Mossi live in Ouahigouya, Kaya, Tougan, Fada, and the circles of Ouagadougou, Koudougou, Tenkodogo and Dedougou; their language is Moré.

The Toucouleur, originally from the middle Senegal, are numerous particularly in Senegal and Mauritania; they also live in the region of Kayes and Bafoulabé.

Finally, the Touareg [Tuareg] roam from Goundam to Gouré. Their proportion of white blood is weak; the same thing applies to the Moors, Arabized Berbers who are counted with their former black captives. The tribes of the Niger region are the Almoussakaré, the Attouajiten, and the Eudde; they speak Touareg.

III. Physical Characteristics of the Bambara

142 History and ethnology show us that the Bambara of today is the product of several peoples whose origin is still unknown to us. Yet, common biological characteristics have developed so the Bambara distinguish themselves physically from other peoples, either by color (they say they are less black than the Bozo and the Sarakolé), by the structure of the body and musculature (they are tall, robust, muscled . . . very different in that from the "feeble Peuls"), or by the form of the skull, with its receding forehead (that of the Peul is straight, "bulging and bumpy").

Tauxier, in his Histoire des Bambara [History of the Bambara], has given an anthropological description based on the work of the following authors: Quatrefages and Hamy, Crania ethnica [Ethnic Crania], 1882; Dr. Collomb, Bull. de la Soc. d'Anth. de Lyon [Bulletin of the Anthropological Society of Lyon], 1885; Hovelacque, Les Nègres d'Afrique sus-équatoriale [Negroes of Supra-Equatorial Africa], 1889; Dr. Verneau, Les races humaines [Human

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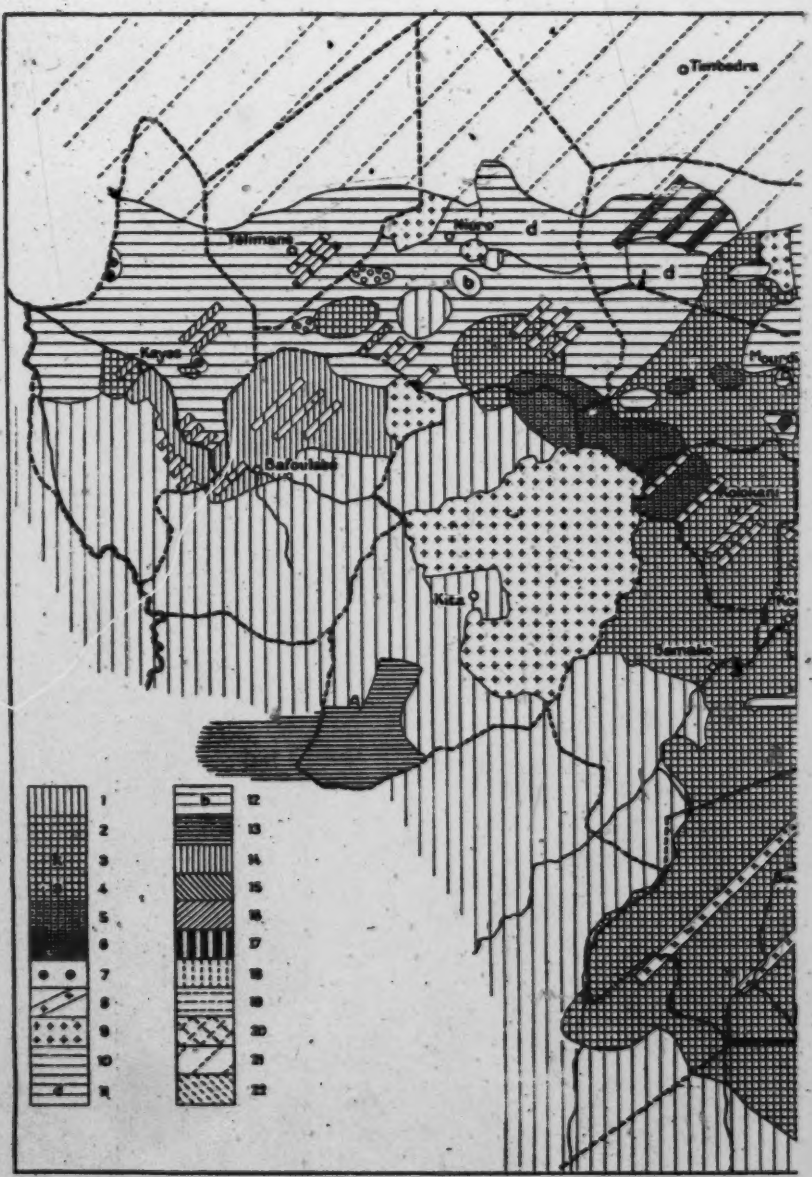
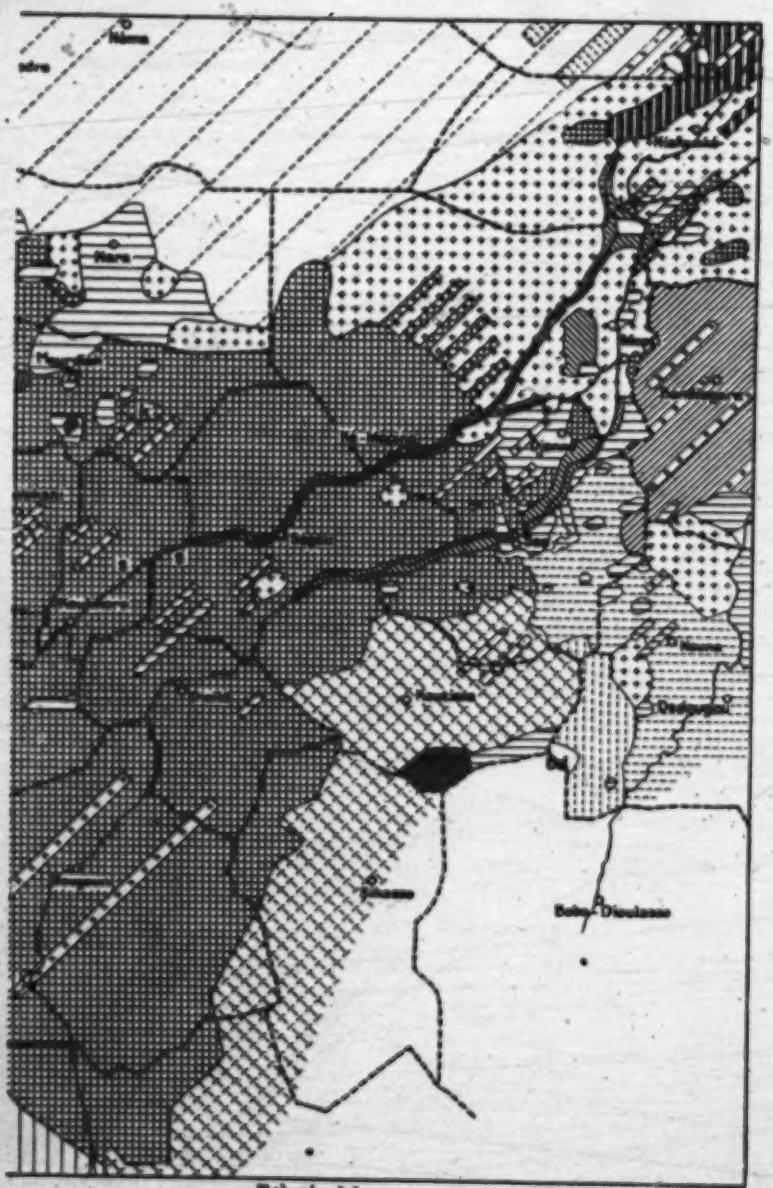


Ethnic Map (1st half)

1. Malinké. - 2. Bambara. - 3. Kalongo. - 4. Somono. - 5. Kagoro.
6. Dioula. - 7. Toucouleur. - 8. Diawambé. - 9. Peul.
10. Sarakolé (Soninké, Marka). - 11. Diawara. -- 12. Diarisso.
- - - - - Limit of subdivisions

3: Paques--151 S-4 (no date) 1954 FA8 Bambara FA8



Ethnic Map (second half)

13. Diallonké. - 14. Kassonké. - 15. Bozo. - 16. Dogon. - 17. Songhaï. - 18. Bobo-Fing. - 19. Bobo-Oulé. - 20. Senoufo. - 21. Maure. - 22. Touareg.

Oblique shading indicates mixed populations.

771 If the Bambara have fought to safeguard their independence,
181 they have done so primarily to preserve their faith and keep their fetishes. They have shown such great attachment for these, that their
[101] conquerors have described them as rebels and applied to them the epithet Bamba, synonym of Kafri. These religious struggles in themselves allow us to state as an indisputable fact that before the arrival of the Moslems the Bambara were animistic and sacrificed to genii. /69/

776 Did they have an exact and precise idea of their genii as they
811 do now? Apparently yes, for they always reasoned using themselves as a basis of comparison so that in their minds the invisible, impalpable genii to whom they sacrificed had a striking resemblance to man. It is not a man, and yet it is one, they say unable to define their concept or idea, ma si fa do (1).

1. Ma; "man"; si fa' "certain kind"; do; "it is."

776 The Moslem word djin translates this idea precisely, and the
782 Bambara use it in everyday language; but when the day of the sacrifice comes, they become unaware of it and there remains only one word -- ma, meaning "man." When they redden with blood the bark of
[824] the baobab (Adansonia digitata), the tamarind tree, the false cedar (family of the cedrelaceae), etc., to obtain the good graces and protection of the genie who dwells there, they always confer on it the title ma ("man"), and never that of djine. "Ma n'zira ba, ma n'tomi ba, ma djala ba; O great baobab man, O great tamarind tree man, O great false-cedar man!" begins the formula used by the sacrificer in offering victims and millet flour to the genie (2). They also have

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2. In /J. Henry/, "Culte des esprits chez les Bambara /Spirit Worship among the Bambara/," Anthropos, Vol. III, No. 4 (1908), p. 1 /p. 702/, note 1, there is an error in translation.

776 What is the meaning of the word sa? Could it be the original
196 name of the Divinity? Since certain Bantu tribes have a high regard for snakes and dedicate a cult to them, some Europeans have wanted to see in it a translation of the word "snake." That is a great and fundamental error. The word sa, "snake," and the word sa in the sentences sa bi fign, sa bi na, etc., may have the same spelling, but
[194] the pronunciation is different. The hard "s" of sa, "snake," is pronounced by opening the teeth slightly and protruding the lips, and the word sa in sa bi fign, etc., is pronounced by closing the teeth and pulling in the lips. Thus, these are two quite distinct words. Moreover, to claim the snake is, or has been, the Bambara divinity seems to me a piece of stupidity. If they do not claim any bond of real or physical kinship even with the animals that are their taboo, one must believe a fortiori that they would not claim /77/ an animal, even a snake, as Creator and sovereign Lord. Some Bambara have it as a family taboo, and a branch of the Mande people have such great respect for the python Minia (1) that now they are known only by the

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1. The Baganda of Uganda before they became Christian venerated the snake as the dwelling place of a demon. Their snake has a great resemblance to the animals that are family taboos for the Bambara, or better still, to the python Minia, taboo of the Mande branch commonly known under the name of Minia-n-ka. Since the Minia-n-ka derive their name from the word Minia, name of the snake that is venerated and an object of public worship, some have insisted that the Bambara or Bamana derive their name from the word Bama, meaning "cayman" /a species of alligator/. If the cayman, Bama in

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the Bambara language, had given its name to the people, this animal would be taboo for them, as the Minia is taboo for the Minianka, and the Mani or Mali, the hippopotamus, is taboo for the Malinke. None of this is true of the cayman in Bambara country; it is in no way the taboo of the tribe. Moreover, the word Bamana could just as well come from the word bama, a kind of tench /a fresh-water fish of the carp family/ which is found in abundance in the Bani and the Niger. This idea has not occurred to the partisans of the cayman, who undoubtedly are not familiar with the fish called bama. The word Bambara comes from the word bamba which means "rebel" and, in the mouths of the Moslems, carries the meaning of Kafri. Bambara means "the rebel who has never submitted to Islam," and the Negroes of the west speak of Bamako or Bambako, "the river of the rebels." Father Copte, a student of the Bambara recognized by the Negroes of the Ségou, quickly understood this fact and noted it in his accounts in the Annals of the White Fathers. Mr. De Lafosse, an administrator most conversant with the native laws, customs, and ways, recognized it also, and I share their opinion concerning the name Bambara.

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name of Minia-n-ka, the people of the Minia snake. But have the Minianka ever worshipped, or do they still worship, the snake as their